

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10 AID-05

OMB-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 DHA-02 ORM-01 OC-05 CCO-00

/097 W

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O R 031215Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6050

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

DIA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 11075

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, LE

SUBJECT: TENSION MOUNTS IN LEBANON IN WAKE OF SINAI AGREEMENT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 10906 (B) BEIRUT 10950 (C) BEIRUT 10963 (D)
BEIRUT 11043

1. WITH THE ZAHLE AREA STILL TENSE (REFTELS NOTAL), LEBANON SUFFERED INSECURITY FROM ANOTHER QUARTER AS PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS BEGAN A SERIES OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND STRIKES TO PROTEST THE INTERIM SINAI AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, A LOCAL INCIDENT IN THE NORTH COASTAL CITY OF TRIPOLI HAS ADDED A THIRD DIMENSION TO THESE TROUBLES.

2. ZAHLE: CONTINUING STRINGENT SECURITY MEASURES AND CONCILIATION EFFORTS THROUGH COMMUNITY, LEADERS HAVE KEPT THE LID ON THE SITUATION IN AND AROUND ZAHLE, BUT THE DISCOVERY OF NEW BODIES HAS HEIGHTENED TENSION AND RENEWED KIDNAPPINGS REPORTEDLY HAVE OCCURRED.

3. STRIKE AGAINST SINAI ACCORD: FEDAYEEN GROUPS, APPARENTLY SPEARHEADED BY THE PDFLP BUT EMBRACING A WIDE SPECTRUM OF PALESTINIANS, CALLED A GENERAL STRIKE CENTERED IN SOUTH LEBANON FOR TODAY, SEPTEMBER 3 TO PROTEST THE SINAI ACCORD. LEBANESE LEFTIST GROUPS JOINED THE APPEAL. THE STRIKE IS EFFECTIVE IN REFUGEE CAMPS AND OTHER AREAS OF PALESTINIAN INFLUENCE. SIDEON IS SHUT DOWN. PALESTINIANS ARE ALSO ACTIVE IN PARTS OF BEIRUT, SETTING UP ROADBLOCKS. AS OF 1200 HOURS (LOCAL) SEPT. 3 THERE IS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF ONE UNIDENTIFIED MAN KILLED NEAR THE SABRA-SHATILA REFUGEE CAMP. HOWEVER, THE STRIKE IS ONLY PARTLY AFFECTING COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY IN THE CITY. THIS COULD CHANGE AS THOSE AGITATING FOR THE
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STRIKE PASS THROUGH THE STREETS WITH LOUD-SPEAKERS CALLING FOR A GENERAL SHUTDOWN. LEBANESE SECURITY HAS FOR THE FIRST TIME PROVIDED PROTECTION FOR EGYPTIAN EMBASSY AND HAS INCREASED STAND-BY PROTECTION FOR U.S. EMBASSY.

4. OTHER BEIRUT DIFFICULTIES: TWO ROCKETS

WERE FIRED ON THE PHALANGE HEADQUARTERS IN AIN ROMMANEH DURING THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 2-3, BUT THEY MISSED THE TARGET AND THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE REACTION SO FAR.

5. TRIPOLI: AS IF THE THINLY SPREAD SECURITY FORCES DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT ALREADY, STRIFE BROKE OUT IN TRIPOLI SEPT. 2 FOLLOWING A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT. ARGUMENT BETWEEN THE DRIVERS QUICKLY ESCALATED INTO A CLASH BETWEEN MOSLEM GUNMEN FROM TRIPOLI (PRIME MINISTER KARAME'S HOME TOWN) AND CHRISTIAN GUNMEN FROM NEARBY ZGHORTA (PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S STRONGHOLD). SECURITY FORCES MANAGED TO SEPARATE THE WARRING PARTIES, AND FRANGIEH AND KARAME INTERVENED ALONG WITH INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN IN AN EFFORT TO STOP THE FIGHTING. THE TROUBLE APPEARS TO BE CONTAINED AS OF THE MOMENT. (NOTE: THIS INTERVENTION BY FRANGIE IS ONE OF THE FEW PRONOUNCEMENTS BY HIM ON SECURITY SINCE TROUBLE BEGAN LAST WEEK IN ZAHLE. THUS FAR, HEEHAS LET KARAME AND INTERIOR MINISTER CHAMOUN CARRY THE BALL FOR THE GOVERNMENT.)

6. COMMENTS: FORTUNATELY THESE SEPARATE SOURCES OF INSTABILITY HAVE NOT YET COMBINED INTO ANY SINGLE WAVE OF AGITATION BUT THEY FEED ON EACH OTHER, AND THE POTENTIAL EXISTS FOR MORE SERIOUS TROUBLE. GODLEY

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